

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT CO.,
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
6015 Paseo Delicias
Rancho Santa Fe
San Diego
California

HABS NO. CA-2306-C

HABS
CAL
37-RANSE,
4C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HABS
CAL
37-RANSE
4C-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY, HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

HABS No. CA-2306-C

Location: 6015 Paseo Delicias, at the corner of Via de Santa Fe, Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego County, California. Rancho Santa Fe Block G, lot 3 and portion lot 4. San Diego County parcel number 266-285-03.

UTM zone 11, easterly 481080, northerly 3653280

Present Owner: R. G. Francisco Investment Company

Present Occupant: Coldwell Bankers

Present Use: offices

Significance: Part of the "office block" of commercial buildings erected in 1922 by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company on Block G in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe, this structure was the local headquarters for the Company and housed the office of L. G. Sinnard, project manager.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1922. An article by Lilian Rice, "More Building in 1928 than ever Before," (Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 [January 1928]: 11, 14) recalls:

Looking back five years, to November of 1922 when actual work began at Rancho Santa Fe, we find each year marking another achievement.

It was an important day when ground was broken for the Guest House, the first building in the Civic Center. The office group and the garage quadrangle followed soon afterward. (p. 14)

2. Architect: Lilian Jenette Rice
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Chain of Ownership taken from Assessment Records, Santa Fe Irrigation District, Rancho Santa Fe, and from information supplied by Veva Francisco:

1922-1928 title to lot 3, portion lot 4 owned by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

1929 owned by Rancho Santa Fe Corporation

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY,
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
HABS No. CA-2306-C (Page 2)

1930-1936 reacquired by Santa Fe Land Improvement Company

1936 title acquired by Robert C. Francisco

1/9/45 title transferred to Robert C. and Veva Francisco

12/31/59 title transferred to R. C. Francisco Investment Company

In 1991, title is held by the Francisco Family.

4. Original plans and construction: Although no original plans for this structure have been found, two preliminary sketches have been located (included as supplemental information for HABS No. CA-2306 A). The drawings are undated and unsigned, although they are by the hand of Lilian Rice, and probably date to early 1922. The first is an aerial perspective of Blocks F and G in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe. The second, more detailed drawing is of the Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe streetscapes of Block G.

The first drawing shows the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building as two rectangular shapes, one twice as long as the other; both have flat roofs and parapets. On the Paseo Delicias facade of the building, there are three windows, each with a hood and support, and a door. On the courtyard facade, four window openings are visible.

The second drawing accurately anticipates the appearance of the two street facades as recorded in early views. In this sketch, the building is divided into two distinct parts, each with a different facade: the first (equivalent to the smaller rectangular structure shown in the first drawing) straddles both the Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe facades, with the main doorway extending on an angle across the corner; the second (equivalent to the longer rectangle in the first drawing) extends down Via de Santa Fe. The main doorway has an arched surround with quoins. The first part of the building has a prominent parapet above a molded cornice, and windows with hoods and supports and iron grills. The doors, one on each facade, have square surrounds. The two facades are symmetrical, but there is an additional window on the south side of the Paseo Delicias facade. The second part of the building has prominent buttresses marking each end of this second section, and a slight eave of Spanish tile. The cornice is elaborate and supported by plaster brackets. The square windows, one on either side of the doorway (each a group of three 24-light fixed sash), have molded hoods above. The arched doorway has a drip hood around the top. All four doorways, on both parts of the building, are deeply recessed. A water table runs along the base of both the Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe facades of the first part of the building.

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY,
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
HABS No. CA-2306-C (Page 3)

5. Alterations and additions: Three blueprints dated October 18, 1938, which record what appears to be the first major exterior alterations, have been located. (See supplementary material.) On the Paseo Delicias elevation, the windows, grills and doors were removed, and replaced by four plaster Tuscan columns (two engaged, two freestanding), and folding doors, all with an 8' lintel above. On the westernmost part of the Via de Santa Fe elevation, the two windows (and their hood and supports) were removed, and plastered over. The door was retained. On the second part of this elevation, the glass was removed from the doorway and replaced by louvers, and a screen door added. On the eastern group of windows on this elevation, the western sash was removed and a paneled door with a six-light view panel added.

In 1990, the exterior of the building was restored to its pre-1938 appearance, with the exception of the Paseo Delicias facade. There, the plaster columns were retained, but the folding doors were removed and replaced by three groups of three eight-light fixed sash windows.

- B. Historical context: This building is one of a group of three commercial structures (also HABS No. CA-2306 A and HABS No. CA-2306 B) erected in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe in late 1922. During the first ten years of the community, it was used as administrative headquarters for the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, which had sponsored the Rancho Santa Fe development. The rear room functioned as Rancho Santa Fe's first post office and grocery store until 1927. (Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe, Yesterday and Today, 17.) Until his retirement in early 1927, it held the office of L. G. Sinnard, project manager for the Company.

Little is known about Sinnard, who, along with Lilian Rice and W. E. Hodges, was one of the crucial figures in the planning and development of Rancho Santa Fe. By 1905, he was a clerk in the General Passenger Department of the Southern Pacific Railroad in San Francisco. This department was responsible for publishing brochures and advertisements about the Southern Pacific routes and lands in California, in order to increase tourism and land sales in the areas owned or served by the railroad. Between 1908 and 1912 he is believed to have worked for the Colonization Department of the Southern Pacific, developing lands and subdivisions on railroad property. After 1912, he went into business for himself in San Francisco as a "land expert," and worked on numerous projects, among them the development of the town of Atascadero, California. He was hired by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, probably in 1919 or 1920, to prepare a report on the feasibility of subdividing their property in San Diego County, then known as Rancho San Dieguito, into lots for residential and horticultural use. After his recommendations were accepted, he was hired by the Company to be the on-site project manager for the new development, renamed Rancho Santa Fe. Sinnard was responsible for the layout of all roads and lots in Rancho Santa Fe, as well as for the initial conception of the Civic Center,

SANTA FE LAND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY,
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
HABS No. CA-2306-C (Page 4)

which would provide "efficient community service" in a centralized location. Further, once Rancho Santa Fe's development began, he was responsible for all advertising, promotion, and land sales.

Sinnard retired as project manager of Rancho Santa Fe in early 1927, due to illness. His replacement was Sidney R. Nelson, who had begun with the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company as project accountant in 1922. Nelson (also the owner of another documented property, HABS No. CA-2311) continued as manager after the Company's interests were bought out, in 1928, by the Rancho Santa Fe Corporation, a group of Pasadena and Los Angeles businessmen. As such, he continued to occupy the main office in this building. By 1930, however, the Corporation was bankrupt and the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company was forced to repossess the land. A Los Angeles broker, A. R. Bishop, was hired to manage the property for the Company; because he did not live on the Ranch (Reginald M. Clotfelter was the resident sales manager), Bishop had an apartment constructed from the main office in this building. (Connie Clotfelter, Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe, 48; shown on blueprint SH-1, copied in supplemental material.) The rest of the building was used for stores and shops; the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company's offices were moved down the street, to 16915 Avenida de Acacias (Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Offices Building, HABS No. CA-2306 A).

Robert Francisco and his wife Veva had come to Rancho Santa Fe in 1932, when they had leased the grocery store located in the Joers/Ketchum building (HABS No. CA-2308). In 1936, the Franciscos purchased the former Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building, and expanded their store in the new location. (Extensive renovations were made to the building in 1938 to facilitate the business.) Francisco hired a partner, Fred Ashley, as its manager. "Ashleys," as it then became known, was a local landmark (part of it was given over to a butcher shop, the first in Rancho Santa Fe) and an important part of the community until it closed in 1990.

In 1990, Francisco's son, Bob, and his new tenant, Coldwell Banker, sensitively restored the exterior of the building to its pre-1938 appearance, under the guidelines of the Village Commercial District Design and Development Regulations administered by the Rancho Santa Fe Association and Art Jury. These regulations were adopted in February 1991 in order to manage growth and preserve the "unique Village atmosphere," which "embodies the historical and architectural character of the entire community." (Village Commercial District Architectural Design Guidelines, 3.)

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company Headquarters Building is notable for its combination of a simple rectangular building block and stuccoed classical architectural elements (quoins, quatrefoil, bracketed cornice). Also significant are the two distinct facades, which give variety to the Via de Santa Fe streetscape, and the prominent main entrance, angled on the corner of the lot, facing outward toward Paseo Delicias, which provides a conspicuous and appropriate entryway to the Headquarters Building.
2. Condition of Fabric: The exterior condition is excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This L-shaped building, with street facades of 51' x 105', is one-story high. Its Paseo Delicias facade had five bays (openings); currently, there is one large opening, bounded by the two engaged columns, and the large entryway at the corner. The Via de Santa Fe facade has a total of seven bays.
2. Foundation: Poured concrete water table of approximately 2' in height serves as the foundation for the first part of the building (with facades on Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe). This water table was originally painted a different color than the rest of the building. A poured concrete foundation serves the second part of the building (with facade on Via de Santa Fe).
3. Walls: Adobe brick with stucco and paint.
4. Structural system: Load-bearing adobe brick walls.
5. Stoops: There is a slight concrete stoop in front of the easternmost doorway on the Via de Santa Fe facade. Prior to 1938, on the south side of the building, facing the courtyard on the interior of the block, there was a one-step stoop of unknown material (but presumably concrete). This stoop was retained after the 1938 renovation, but is no longer extant in 1991. In 1991, there is a concrete stoop with steps on the eastern side of the building, perpendicular to Via de Santa Fe. It is not known if this stoop is original to the structure.
6. Chimneys: The 1938 floorplans indicate that there were two flues and two side-by-side fireplaces in the structure. The number of chimneys at that date is, however, not shown on the plans or accompanying elevations. In 1991, all chimneys have been removed.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance doorway is at the corner of Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe. It has an arched surround with molded plaster quoins. The original door, deeply recessed, was a heavy, wooden, six-light double door with an arched single-light window above. Originally, both the Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe facades had subsidiary doorways with square molded plaster surrounds, painted a different color than the rest of the building. This doorway was replaced on the Paseo Delicias facade in 1938. The original doors for these openings were wooden with six-light view panels, and were replaced in 1990. On the eastern part of the Via de Santa Fe facade, the doorway has a square molded plaster drip hood and an arched molded plaster surround. The original door is unknown, but presumably was quite similar, if not identical to the present one: a heavy, wooden 20-light double door with a multi-light arched window above. On the rear of the building, facing the courtyard, there was originally at least one door of unknown description.
- b. Windows: The typical original window on the first part of the building (three on the Paseo Delicias facade, and two on Via de Santa Fe) were ten-light French windows with decorative wrought-iron grills and plaster hoods and supports. On the Paseo Delicias facade these windows have been removed. On the Via de Santa Fe facade they have been replaced, as have the grills, hoods, and supports, although they retain the original profile of the first windows. On the second part of the building, the easternmost Via de Santa Fe facade, the original windows were two groups of three 24-light awning windows. They were replaced in 1990. Prior to 1938, on the south and southwest sides of the building, facing the courtyard on the interior of the block, were at least three windows of unknown description. They were retained during the 1938 renovation, but are no longer extant in 1991.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is flat with parapet, covered with asphalt and built-up roofing materials. On the first part of the building, the parapet has a slight molded plaster cornice, and, from the string band to the parapet cornice, at the corners of each facade, there are simulated engaged pilasters. On the parapet above the angled corner entryway is a quatrefoil opening with an iron grill.

- b. Cornices, eave: On the first part of the building (with facades on Paseo Delicias and Via de Santa Fe), there is a molded plaster cornice. On the second part of the building (with a facade on Via de Santa Fe), there is a molded plaster cornice with molded plaster brackets below. On this facade there is also a slight eave of Spanish tile, regularly laid.
- C. Description of Interior: The interior of this building was not documented, as it was completely renovated and modernized in 1990; no remnants of the original interior remain. However, the three blueprints dated October 18, 1938, do record the arrangement of interior spaces at that time. (See supplemental material.) It should be noted, however, that this was not the original interior arrangement; the building had been partially converted from the Santa Fe Land Improvement Headquarters Building into a combination of apartment/office/store building previous to the 1938 renovation.
- D. Site: The building is located on the northwest corner of Block G in the Civic Center of Rancho Santa Fe. It faces east onto Paseo Delicias and north onto Via de Santa Fe.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Preliminary sketches for Block G and Blocks G and F, Civic Center, Rancho Santa Fe. Unsigned and undated. Location of originals unknown. Photographs of sketches in the collection of the University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Blueprints of alteration drawings dated 18 October 1938, Oliver Ayers and John Foster, LaPaz Homes, Rancho Santa Fe.

B. Early Views:

"Douglas Fairbanks-Mary Pickford Fairbanks" Scrapbook, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Congreg, 1985: 27, 28.

Photographs, Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Photographs, Union Title Insurance and Trust Company Historical Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 3 (September 1927): 4; 1 no. 12 (June 1928): 5; 2 no. 3 (September 1928): 4;

Shippey, Lee. "Rancho Santa Fe - California's Perfectly Planned Community." Architect and Engineer 76 (February 1924): 55-63.
Reprint. n.p., n.d.

C. Interviews:

Reginald Clotfelter, telephone interview with Lauren Farber, 24 July 1991.

Veva Francisco, telephone interview with Lauren Farber, 25 July 1991.

Charles Nelson, telephone interview with Lauren Farber, 24 July 1991.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Nelson, Charles. "Earlier Years in San Diego and Rancho Santa Fe." 1989. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

_____. "Memorandum Notes for the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society." 1991. Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society Archives.

Charles Nelson, Laredo, Texas, to Lauren Farber, Rancho Santa Fe, California, TLS, 18 July 1991.

Rancho Santa Fe Association Senior Planner File, "Ashleys," Rancho Santa Fe Association.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Clotfelter, Connie. Echoes of Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Conreg, 1985.

Eddy, Lucinda Liggett. "Lilian Jenette Rice: The Lady as Architect." M.A. thesis, University of San Diego, 1985.

_____. "Lilian Jenette Rice: Search For A Regional Ideal." Journal of San Diego History 29 (Fall 1983): 262-285.

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter. A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, 1977.

Nelson, Ruth R. Rancho Santa Fe: Yesterday and Today. n.p., n.d.

Rancho Santa Fe Association. Village Commercial District Architectural Design Guidelines, Rancho Santa Fe. Rancho Santa Fe: Rancho Santa Fe Association, 1990.

Rice, Lilian J. "More Building in 1928 than ever Before." Rancho Santa Fe Progress 1 no. 7 (January 1928): 11, 14.

- E. Supplemental Material: Three blueprints of alteration drawings dated 18 October 1938, from Oliver Ayers and John Foster, LaPaz Homes, Rancho Santa Fe.

Prepared by: Lauren Farber
HABS Project Historian
Rancho Santa Fe, CA
June 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society, Inc. and Rancho Santa Fe Association. Under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), and Paul Dolinsky, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey and Project Leader, the documentation was completed in the HABS field office at Rancho Santa Fe, California during the Summer of 1991 by Professor John P. White (Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; Architectural Technicians Sheri L. Bonstelle (Columbia University); Juan Tampe (Catholic University of America); Piotr Trebacz (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland, U.S./I.C.O.M.O.S.); E. Matthew Walter (University of Hawaii at Manoa); and Architectural Historian Lauren Farber, Sally Kress Tompkins Fellow (University of Delaware).





